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# POSTER HANDBOOK

*A Plan for Displaying Official War Posters*

- How to obtain them from the Government
- How to organize a poster committee
- How to distribute them in your community
- How to display them to advantage

U.S.



Prepared in Cooperation With the U. S. Office of Civilian Defense

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Local Defense Councils in many parts of the country have been calling on us for more war posters which can be displayed in their communities. These Councils have indicated to us that they are interested not simply in OCD posters but in any posters dealing with the war effort.

The major difficulty has been to develop a regular working system to assure each community wishing to undertake this helpful war activity of a regular flow of posters, at the same time not sending posters to Councils which did not wish to undertake this job or were not organized to do it. We do not wish to send posters to communities which do not want them, nor do we want to see posters stacked in Defense Council closets for lack of adequate machinery to post them.

We have, therefore, worked out an arrangement with the Office of War Information—which controls the publication and distribution of all government war posters—wherein local option is the determining factor. This pamphlet shows how any local Defense Council wanting to engage regularly in the posting of war posters and willing to set up the machinery to do it can arrange to receive new posters once a month from the Office of War Information. It shows how to set up an organization for handling these posters and how to estimate the number that each Council wishes to receive. And, of course, there is provision for returning any poster which any Council feels is inappropriate for its particular community.

The U. S. Office of Civilian Defense commends this as a worthwhile project for local Defense Councils.



*Director, Office of Civilian Defense*

## POSTERS ARE AMMUNITION

Posting of official Government posters is one of the most valuable contributions which citizens can make to the war effort. It can be done in spare time at no expense and the results are welcomed enthusiastically in the community. A wide display of posters is a direct reflection of the spirit of a community. They are great stimulators to other war activities, as well as a valuable means of keeping people accurately informed.

### Distribution—*National and Local*

The Office of War Information, broadly speaking, has two ways to distribute posters. One is to send them out on a *national* scale to lists of organizations or trades such as post offices, restaurants, schools, retail store groups, railroad stations, etc.

The other way is to send a supply to a *local* volunteer group in the community so that these volunteers can place the posters in the dozens of places that are sure to be missed in any national distribution scheme.

*Both ways are essential because neither one alone can do the whole job.* There are always big gaps in the first method and it never can take into account the community as a whole. On the other hand, if volunteers had to handle the whole job alone, it would be too much of a chore.

The plan described in this folder is designed to help local Defense Councils do the *local* job. It does not expect them to put up *all* the posters in their communities, for the Office of War Information will continue to distribute posters through *national* channels as it is now doing and will continue to do so on an increasing scale.

### The Plan

Until now, selections have been made and quantities estimated on each individual poster for local distribution. This procedure has proved too slow, for almost all posters nowadays are emergency messages in which the time factor is of great importance.

To be really effective, the posting of war posters must be organized on a regular schedule. The Office of War Information has now worked out a plan which makes it easy to start and to carry out such an organized schedule.

In general, the plan proposes that each community, through its Defense Council, select a poster committee which shall receive regular quantities of official posters every month directly from the Office of War Information. These will be posters prepared by all the various war agencies—Treasury, War Production Board, Army and Navy, O. P. A., Manpower Commission, and so on. They will be selected by the Office of War Information to tie in closely with the most important Government campaigns which will be publicized through the press, radio, and movies at the time the posters reach your poster committee.



Moreover, a special cardboard frame and easel backing will be furnished free of charge in moderate quantities by the Office of War Information in which the new posters can be mounted every month. Each shipment of posters should be posted immediately on receipt and replaced as soon as the next one arrives a month later.

## How to Carry Out the Plan

Here are the steps to be followed in order to put this plan into effect through your local Defense Council:

1. Form a Poster Committee.
2. Select posting places.
3. Work out regular posting routes.
4. Create a distributing organization.
5. Determine quantities and sizes desired.
6. Appoint a central traffic manager to receive posters and apportion them to the individuals or team captains selected in step number 4.
7. Fill out and send to Office of War Information the Poster Pledge on page 5 of this pamphlet.

## Instructions

### 1. *Forming the Committee*

The Chairman of the local Defense Council should select or approve the selection of a Poster Committee. It should be made up of people who can secure the cooperation of various sections or activities of the neighborhood: for instance, a public official for the public buildings and grounds, the stationmaster for the railroad and bus terminals, the principal of the school, the local newspaper editor, etc. The function of this committee is to do the original planning and to see that the continued operation moves smoothly.

The Poster Committee should in turn appoint a Secretary. This person ought to be enthusiastic about the value of posters and accustomed to organizing groups, especially of young people. The local Scout Executive, Y. M. C. A., or Boys' Club leader, school athletic coach, leader of young people's church activities, or any other person of this sort is suggested. The Secretary should have sufficient assistants, the number depending, of course, on the size of the community.

The secretary of the local retail association or Chamber of Commerce should be consulted at the start. He represents the Retailers' War Campaigns Committee, a volunteer distributing agency which has been organizing on a nation-wide scale to deliver posters to retail stores. Your activity, taking in the whole community, will be a broader one, of course, but the stores will be one of its most important aspects, so a careful coordination of plans is essential.

If your community also wants to build and maintain official outdoor posting boards, an Outdoor Subcommittee should be formed. Details of this project are set forth completely in the pamphlet entitled **OFFICIAL OUTDOOR POSTING BOARD** which will be sent upon request.

## 2. *Selecting the Posting Places*

The first job of the Secretary and his assistants is to make a complete tour of the community and list all the places where official war posters can be displayed to best effect. Each spot should be considered from several points of view.

(a) How many people are likely to look at the poster in the posting place under consideration? Places where people collect are the best places: rail and bus stations, busy street corners, recreation centers like bowling alleys, gymnasiums, auditoriums, and ballrooms. Places where people pause are better than places where they hurry by.

(b) Is the place already being serviced with Government posters? Movie theatres are being efficiently served through the National War Activities Committee of the Motion Picture Industry. Many retail stores, especially the larger ones, get them from the Retailers' War Campaigns Committee, but there are still many stores not served and one of them may have the best show window in your community. Don't bother about a place that is already displaying posters as long as it continues to do so effectively.

(c) Is the place practical for posting? Will the surface be injured by tape or tacks or paste? Can a frame or posting board be erected to make posting easier? Is a ladder needed? Avoid difficult places unless they are especially desirable.

(d) Remember that the owner's permission must be secured before placing posters!

(e) If the owner will pledge a display place which you believe to be exceptionally good and if you can be sure that posters will appear there regularly and on time, tell him you probably will be able to furnish him with an official Office of War Information cardboard display frame and easel. Do not promise frames because our supply is limited and you may not receive all you ask for. Additional ones can always be bought at a nominal cost of from 25c to 50c depending on size. Make a careful note of the size so that you can order these frames with your first poster shipment, but do not order them unless you are convinced that they are really worth while.

(f) Be sure to note the size of poster most suitable for each posting place. Posters come in these four sizes:

40	x	56	inches
28½	x	40	inches
22	x	28	inches
14	x	22	inches

(g) Does the place fit into an over-all pattern designed to cover the whole community in the best way? It is much better to select a reasonable number of places carefully planned to be seen by all sections of the community and to service them regularly and efficiently. Don't be over-ambitious especially at first. Don't overload your volunteer workers. A few well-placed posters, regularly changed, are much better than a big pile which gathers dust in the central receiving office.

(h) Are there special considerations which prevent regular posting of all types of messages? Churches, schools, residential windows or fences should be considered separately for posters suitable to their needs.

## 3. *Posting Routes*

When a complete list of the best posting places has been made, get a simple outline map of your community from the city or county engineer and mark the places on it. Then work out very carefully the ways that these places can best be serviced every month. In doing this the individuals or teams who will do the posting should be considered so that the route will be most convenient and economical for everyone. If some place you have selected is out of the way, cross it off unless it is highly desirable.



#### 4. *Distributing Organization*

Each community will choose its own pattern for developing a distributing organization. Where it is customary for the Boy Scouts, the Y. M. C. A., the Boys' Club, or some similar organization to distribute posters used in Community Chest, Red Cross, and other local campaigns, it may be decided to develop the distributing organization of the Poster Subcommittee of the local Defense Council by using this existing resource. In any case, each volunteer should be responsible for putting up the posters he delivers. The job is not an easy one and long-term dependability is more important than flash enthusiasm. The success of the entire undertaking will depend most of all on the volunteers you select to carry it out. Here are a few suggestions:

- (a) Try to assign regions to people who live or work in them.
- (b) Give your men places they are interested in and familiar with; business places to salesmen or tradesmen; public buildings to Scouts; bus stops to some one who rides the bus line, etc.
- (c) Enlist the services of men making regular deliveries of food, fuel, or supplies, night watchmen, inspectors, etc.
- (d) Women and girls can help particularly in specialty shops, ladies' rest rooms, tea shops, beauty parlors, etc.

#### 5. *Quantities and Sizes*

Not until all of these first four steps are completed should the final quantities of posters be determined. Then, when a realistic and practical program has been worked out and you are certain that the places you have finally selected can and will be serviced, you should decide the quantity you will require every month. Next fill out the Poster Pledge page 5 which should then be torn off and mailed to Washington.

Quantities must be specified for each of the four sizes (40" x 56", 28½" x 40", 22 x 28", and 14" x 22"). Quantities and sizes must also be specified for easel frames.

#### 6. *Receiving Posters from Office of War Information*

The Secretary of the Committee will receive the shipments of posters at a designated address from the Office of War Information warehouse at the first part of each month. It will be his responsibility to see that the members of the distributing organization receive their allotted numbers of posters in the correct sizes. He should keep a careful record of all receipts and distribution.

#### 7. *Poster Pledge*

As soon as your program is planned and your organization completed fill out the Poster Pledge.

### ***United States Citizens Service Corps***

Volunteers engaged in activities of poster committees are eligible for admission to the U. S. Citizens Service Corps and are entitled to wear its insignia, subject to the regulations of the Office of Civilian Defense and the policies of State and local Defense Councils.

*Act Quickly.*—Many of the campaigns are now under way. Many fine posters are coming out now which you will not want to miss.

## POSTER PLEDGE

We, the undersigned, representing a group of citizens of \_\_\_\_\_, in the State of \_\_\_\_\_, have been appointed as the Poster Committee of our local Defense Council to post and distribute official posters issued by the various Departments and War Agencies of the Government of the United States in general accordance with the monthly plan offered by the Office of War Information.

We certify that we have formed a committee to carry out this task and that we shall use the posters which we have requested on the reverse of this Pledge to the best of our abilities for the duration of the war or until such time as we, at our sole discretion, shall notify the Office of War Information that we have decided to discontinue this agreement. Furthermore, we reserve the right to decline to post any poster which we feel is not suitable for distribution in our community, but in case of such a refusal we agree to return collect the supply of that poster promptly to the Office of War Information.

Approved \_\_\_\_\_

Chairman, Civilian Defense Council

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Secretary, Poster Committee

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**IMPORTANT!** Be sure to fill out information on the other side of this page. Return to Division of Production and Distribution, Office of War Information, 1400 Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington, D. C.

*Change Regularly.*—Fresh posters attract attention, but when people see the same old posters week after week they gradually grow impervious to posters in general. Post promptly so you won't miss the tie-up with press, radio, and movies.

*Estimate Conservatively.*—Don't try to bite off too much at once. Your organization can grow and you can increase your poster order when your organization is running smooth.

## SHIPPING INSTRUCTIONS

To be filled out and returned to Division of Production and Distribution, Office of War Information, 1400 Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington, D. C.

The number of posters which we shall require every month in each of four sizes are:

(Add about 2% to each size, for possible damage in handling, making each figure to the nearest 5)

----- Posters size 40 x 56 inches.  
----- Posters size 28½ x 40 inches.  
----- Posters size 22 x 28 inches.  
----- Posters size 14 x 22 inches.  
----- Total.

These quantities will be shipped to you the first part of each month.

As a rule a selection of two different poster designs will be sent once a month. But this practice will vary depending on the war campaigns which are being emphasized each time.

*Avoid Waste.*—Posters are valuable and should be treated as real war ammunition. Never let a poster lie idle. Make every one count to the fullest extent.

The number of easel frames which we desire are:

----- for 40 x 56 posters.  
----- for 28½ x 40 posters.  
----- for 22 x 28 posters.  
----- for 14 x 22 posters.

Do you want us to quote you prices on additional frames?

☐ Yes ☐ No.

All shipments should be made to—

Name -----  
Address -----  
City -----  
State -----